

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method of delivering audio and audio visual works to users of computer terminals includes the steps of: providing a data warehouse of digitized works; providing program means for end user computers to access, select and play at least one of the works; providing means for controlling end user access to the works and for collecting payment for playing at least one of the works; and diverting a portion of the payment for playing the at least one work to the holder of a copyright to the at least one work. The method preferably includes the additional steps of encrypting the works; and providing the end user with program means for deciphering the works. The method still further preferably includes additional the steps of delivering advertising matter to the end user with each work the end user selects and plays; keeping a record of the particular works each end user selects and plays; customizing advertising delivered to the end user to fit within any pattern of work selection by the particular end user. An apparatus for performing the method is also provided, including a computer hive made up of several inter-linked computers having specialized functions, the computers operating in unison to build a supercomputer that has shared disk space and memory, in which each node belongs to the collective and possesses its own business rules and membership to an organization managerial hierarchy.